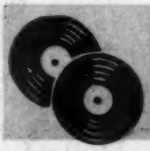
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The American RECORD GUIDE



JANUARY, 1952 - VOL. 18, No. 5



Edited by

Peter Hugh Reed

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Beethoven: Sonata No. 14 in C-Sharp Minor, Op. 27, No. 2 ("Moonlight"); Sonata No. 26 in E-Flat Major, Op. 81a ("Les Adieux"). Rudolf Serkin. LP ML 4432 · Also on 45 rpm.

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The American
RECORD
GUIDE

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The American Music Lover

Victor's New "Treasury" Series

▲Last year, RCA Victor turned back the pages of record history by issuing a group of selections made by artists of yesterday, whose fame will always live through their recordings. The voice of Caruso, as well as many others, proved once again to have magic in it, and the public response to the series — to which RCA Victor attached the fancy title of "A Treasury of Immortal Performances" — was most gratifying. Indeed, some of the LP reissues became best sellers of 1951. This month, RCA Victor adds seven more LP discs to the series as well as corresponding 45 rpm issues — headed once again with the artistry of Enrico Caruso.

Caruso in Opera and Song (LP disc LCT-1034) represents the great tenor in varied though strangely assorted selections. The changing quality of his voice is revealed — from his surprisingly lyrical rendition of *Di quella pira* from *Il Trovatore* (1906), to his heavy-bodied and more effortful *Domine Deus* from Rossini's *Messe Solennelle* (1920 — the last recording he made). In all, however, the fervor and sensuous beauty of his singing prevails, and one realizes again and again what a phenominal organ he possessed. Side 1 contains the *Barcarolle* from *Un Ballo in Maschera*; *E lucevan* from *Tosca*; Donaudy's song *Vaghissima sembianza*; and the arias from *Il Trovatore*. Of these, the *Tosca* and the *Trovatore* are the most praiseworthy. Side 2 contains the "Prayer" from Massenet's *Le Cid*; Tosti's *'A Vucchella*; *Testa adorata* from Leoncavallo's forgotten *La Boheme*; Alvarez's *A Granada*; and the Rossini air. In all these, except the last much of his most appealing vocal qualities are demonstrated.

Rosa Ponselle in Opera and Song (10" LP disc LCT-10) represents the noted soprano in both electrical and acoustic recordings — her memorable singing of Julia's two arias from *La Vestale* and her expressive singing of the *Salce! Salce* and *Ave Maria* from *Otello*. The disc also contains two songs — Schubert's *Ave Maria* (made in 1925) and *Home, Sweet Home* (made in 1939) — never before released. Ponselle's voice had a sensuous beauty and a freedom of range which was truly thrilling. One wishes that Victor had used two discs — one of Ponselle in opera arias alone, and the other in songs. However, few listeners who admire her wonderful voice will wish to miss this record.

Aida of Yesterday (LP disc LCT-1035) is a strange mixture of artists and style. It opens with Gigli singing *Celeste Aida*, then Rethberg singing *Ritorna vincitor*, followed by the "Temple Scene" sung by Martinelli, Pinza and the Metropolitan Opera Chorus. These are all electrical recordings; thereafter the selections are acoustic ones. Band 4 on side 1 contains Ponselle's 1923 recording of *O patria mia*. Side 2 opens with the famous duet between Aida and Amonasro by Gadski and Amato. Few collectors realize that Gadski in her time was a famous Aida which is surely borne out by this release. Of considerable interest is the next selection — the first half of the "Love Duet," sung by Ponselle and Martinelli. This recording, made in Feb. 1924, was never before issued, undoubtedly because electrical re-

production began late that year. Both artists, at the height of their powers, are in superb voice. The scene at the opening of Act IV between Amneris and Rhadames, sung by Louise Homer and Caruso, completes the record. Made in 1910, the latter represents the artistry of its protagonists at their finest.

John McCormack in Opera and Song (LP disc LCT-1036) may be regarded as a strangely chosen program with its intermixture of electrics and acoustics, but it offers some rarely stylistic tenor singing. Here, we find pure legato, a flexibility and nuancing of tone that calls for the highest praise. The singer is first heard in his 1910 *Fra poco a me ricovero* from *Lucia*, then in Tristan's reply to King Mark — *O König das ich dir nicht sagen* from Act 2 of *Tristan und Isolde*. This latter was made in 1930 but never released. Mrs. McCormack found the original test pressing from which the present recording was made. Though the tenor would hardly have made an imposing Tristan, his singing of this scene has more lyric beauty and nuance than that of any German tenor I have heard. Wagner's *Träume* follows, and then comes one of those charming Irish songs sung in the inimitable style that McCormack possessed with every word clearly enunciated — *The Fairy Tree*. On the reverse face, he is heard in the *Berceuse* from *Jocelyn* with Kreisler playing the violin, in *Una furtiva lagrima* from *L'Elisir d'amore*, in his later (1927) recording of *I Hear You Calling Me*, and lastly in his 1926 *Adeste Fideles* with the Trinity Choir. McCormack's *Una furtiva lagrima* is as great a performance of this famous tenor aria as is his performance of *Il mio tesoro* from *Don Giovanni*. As John Rosenfeld, the Dallas music critic, says in his notes, "It is a revelation of communicativeness and singing technique."

Famous Duets (LP disc LCT-1037) offers a group of old Victor favorites made over a period of two decades — 1908 to 1027. Side 1 opens with the "Drinking Song" from *Traviata* sung by Alma Gluck, Caruso and the Metropolitan Chorus, then the "Love Duet" from *Madama Butterfly* — Farrar and Caruso. The spurious story about Farrar's opening words is rightfully refuted by the annotator, Deems Taylor. Knowing the Italian language, I have never been able to understand how anyone could hear anything but the original text in what Miss Farrar sings. Following these two acoustics comes the electrical recordings of the finale of *Lucia*, from the entrance of the chorus after the aria *Fra poco a me ricovero*, made by Gigli, Pinza and the Metropolitan Chorus in December 1927. Side 2 contains four acoustic recordings — the duet *Parigi, o cara* from *Traviata* by Bori and McCormack (surely some of the most beautiful lyrical singing ever recorded), *Son geloso del zeffiro* from *La Sonnambula* by Galli-Curci and Schipa, the *Barcarolle* from *The Tales of Hoffmann* by Farrar and

(Continued on page 164)

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THE SINGERS' TOLL

FOR THE YEAR OF 1951

(Continued from last month)

By Leo Riemens

Part II

Italy lost during the Verdi memorial year in 1951, two of its greatest Verdi sopranos — **Giannina Russ** and **Giannina Arangi-Lombardi.** The former died first, in January, as a pensioner in Verdi's rest-house for old musicians. There she had continued teaching to the very end. Her Fonotipia recordings are justly prized by collectors, but before them she made a series of even rarer black G&Ts. She reached the peak of her career during the former Verdi commemorations of 1913, when she sang extensively at La Scala and all other Italian theatres. Hers was a large repertoire — including Verdi's heroines in *Nabucco*, *Don Carlos*, *Forza del Destino*, *Rigoletto*, *Traviata*, *Ballo in Maschera*, *Trovatore*, and *Aida*. She appeared in America one season with the Hammerstein Opera Company, where among other roles she sang Valentine in *Les Huguenots*. Her repertoire on Fonotipia discs was large and varied, including among many interesting items such as the great duet from *Nabucco*, with Enrico Nani (on 3 sides) (which was the only recording until the recent LP recording came out), a whole series of selections from *Norma* (a part in which she excelled) with Virginia Guerrini, a duet from *La Wally* with Viglione-Borghese, another from Mascagni's *Amica* with Corradetti, and innumerable selections from her various Verdi roles. Though she was essentially a lyric-dramatic (spinto) soprano, she successfully sang Gilda and Lucia. In this respect she was the precursor of Maria Meneghini Callas.

Russ's records are becoming more and more appreciated, because of her pure and even vocal line, which was free of the usual Italian blemishes of exaggeration. To compare her records with those of her contemporary, Eugenia Burzio, is to find two complete contrasts in style and temperament. The latter endulged in sobs and dramatic excesses, while the former's was a serene and noble style of singing. It is no wonder that many today appreciate her recordings in which the "bel canto" style generally prevails. Her re-recorded aria from *Don Carlos* (issued by IRCC) is typical of her art, though her older piano-accompanied Fonitipia recordings were clearer in reproduction.

The other Verdi prima donna — Arangi-Lombardi — was a generation nearer than Russ. Originally, she was a mezzo-soprano, but as such, an indifferent one (as can be heard on her rare Phonodisc recordings which she made around 1920). These are also found with Artiphone and Wotana labels, and include duets with the tenor Alabiso. Shortly after making her early recordings, as a mezzo-soprano, Arangi-Lombardi studied with Adelina

Stehle (creator of the roles of Nanetta and Nedda, who also died in the Verdi home), who made her a dramatic soprano. As such she was the foremost Norma and Aida in Italy during the 1920s. Her career coincided with the great Toscanini decade at La Scala. With him she visited Berlin in 1929, where she created a sensation. Though she never sang in America, her voice is quite well known there through her Columbia recordings. As Aida, in the early complete set issued by Columbia, she was finer — in my estimation — than any other soprano who has sung in a complete version of this opera. She was also heard as Gioconda in Columbia's complete issue — in which her artistry is not likely soon to be surpassed on records — and as Santuzza in the early Columbia set. In the latter role, she was in line with Bruna-Rasa's more recent touching interpretation. She was also the Elena in Boito's *Mefistofele*, also a Columbia release. In addition to these full opera recordings, this singer made numerous separate arias and duets — the latter with Stignani, Merli and others. Like Russ, Arangi-Lombardi disdained cheap tricks and remained a singer of noble tradition. Her voice was quite individual — not at all typically 1920-Italian. To appreciate the difference, one has only to compare her with her contemporary rival — Bianca Scacciati — whose voice was of iron.

Arangi-Lombardi possessed a dark-hued vocal timbre, which retained much of its original mezzo-soprano quality. As a soprano she acquired remarkable agility and a round and smooth upper register, which lacked completely the piercing sharpness of so many Italian sopranos. Listen to her *D'amor sull' ali rosee* from *Il Trovatore*, where she sings all the trills which so many omit. It is a pity that she never left us a sample of her magnificent Donna Anna. The duet from Norma, made with Stignani, is almost as good as the Ponselle-Telva, and one regrets that a complete *Norma* was not planned until after Arangi-Lombardi retired. It must be pointed out that her oldest Columbias were recorded at 80 rpm, which makes them heavier in quality on modern machines that cannot be set at the higher speed. Collectors should realize that it is a prime necessity to have a modern motor with adjustable speeds, if one is to hear historical recordings properly reproduced.

After her retirement, Arangi-Lombardi became a well known teacher. For some time, she worked at the conservatory at Ankara, Turkey, where she was succeeded by Elvira De Hidalgo. One of her pupils, Irma Bozzi-Lucca, won second prize in the Scheveningen contest of 1949. Arangi-Lombardi died on the 9th of July at the age of 60.

Two other Italian artists who died this past year were the basso **Antonio Righetti** and the fine baritone **Giulio Fregosi.** The former was a member of Toscanini's La Scala roster in the 1920s. A useful singer, he was hardly remarkable for either voice or style. Fregosi, on the other hand, was a fine artist who for some obscure reason failed to have an international career. He recorded extensively for electrical Odeon-Fonotipia. By a coincidence, he and Righetti made a duet from *I Puritani*.

Hector Dufranne

Turning to France, we record the death of a great historical figure in opera — **Hector Dufranne.** He was the creator of Golaud in *Pelléas et Mélisande* and of many other leading roles in French operas since 1900 (Massenet's forgotten *Thérese* among them). His name is inseparably linked with Hammerstein's Manhattan Opera House and with the great Mary Garden era when French opera blossomed in America as it never did before or since. In later years, he sang with the Chicago Opera Company for many seasons in an amazing repertoire, which even included Wagnerian roles sung in German. Dufranne had a voice of imposing volume and power, which is not well evidenced on his acoustic records. The bass, Henri Scott, once wrote to me that he considered Dufranne the finest singer with whom he had ever worked, possessing the most gigantic voice whose volume even dwarfed the vocal powers of Titta Ruffo. Dufranne

was a fine actor, whose father in Louise was a deeply moving characterization. While in America, he made some Columbia recordings (including a duet from *I Puritani* with Scott). In Europe he made a large list of G&Ts, which were later transferred to green-label Zonophones. Unfortunately, many of the latter are disappointing, sounding muffled and veiled as they date from one of the worst periods in recording history.

Dufranne's Columbia recordings are much better, even though they do not do him full justice. Luckily he made some early electrics, when he was nearly 60, for Columbia, which are more characteristic of him as remembered in the opera house. He was heard as Golaud in the series of *Pelléas* recordings with Nespoulos and Maguenat, and as Ramiro in the complete *L'heure Espagnole* of Ravel (a role it is a wonder he did not create at the premiere). These recordings are of great historical value, especially those from *Pelléas*. Like so many French singers, he retained his vocal powers and continued singing until his old age. His Golaud was still praised in Vichy and other places as late as 1939, and he even made appearances in opera after the war.

Previously Unreported Deaths

In addition to the demises of the year 1951, there are some singers who died earlier but who were not given notices in the press. I am certain readers will be interested to know about them. The most important of these was **Heinrich Rehkemper**, the Munich baritone, who died in December 1949. Strangely, he is just becoming known among many collectors of rare lieder records through his remarkable Polydors. The late English critic, Herman Klein, hailed his *Der Doppelgänger* as the greatest rendition of this difficult song he had ever heard, and many today are of the opinion that it is the finest version on records. He had an intimate style, and a rich and beautifully expressive tonal quality in his prime, which makes his late 1920 lieder recordings of exceptional value. One critic once said that Rehkemper in lieder had that intimate gift of making the listener feel as though he were singing personally to him. His first recordings were acoustic. They contain some great gems — the Mozart concert aria, *Mentre ti lascia o figlia*, Schubert's rarely heard *Orpheus* and a wonderful *Erlkönig*. These latter are practically undiscoverable, but his electrical (and better) recordings still turn up in Europe. His most famous recording, dating from 1929, is that of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*, in which his intimate style is most prevailingly moving. It is strange that this work was not recorded by anyone else until recently when Lorri Lail and Kathleen Ferrier made it for LP. Both are miscast, in my estimation, as this cycle is essentially concerned with a father's grief—not a mother's. (Why is it, one wonders, that female artists must intrude on men's territory, while men seldom if ever do the contrary? Even such intelligent singers as Suzanne Danco and Lotte Lehman make the mistake of singing Schumann's *Dichterliebe*. I'm still waiting for the first baritone to choose *Gretchen am Spinnrade* and *Die Junge Nonne* for different vehicles in his repertoire. The only male blunder I can think of is made by Alexander Kipnis in the Hugo Wolf Society, singing *Wie strahlt der helle Mond* which is definitely a woman's song. Such artists should read David Bispham's *Quaker Singer's Recollections* for intelligent comment on this subject.)

A Great Lieder Singer

Though outdated technically, Rehkemper's *Kindertotenlieder* is the finest from the artistic standpoint. His lieder of Brahms and Schubert were no less praiseworthy, and his Mozart singing was exceptionally fine. A truly thrilling recording of his was the Hugo Wolf *Feuerreiter*, coupled with *Stochenbotschaft*. It is better, in my estimation, than Roswaenge's version in the Hugo Wolf Society.

Another name must be added to the sad list of war-time victims. Only after eight years have I received proof of **Ottilie**

Metzger-Lattermann's death. The great German contralto was murdered by the Nazis at Theresienstadt in the gas-chambers. She had left Germany in 1938 and was living with her daughter in Brussels. The Occupation of Belgium brought her back into the danger-zone, and in 1943 she was deported to Theresienstadt, at the age of 64. She was one of the greatest of all German contraltos, and though not as well known to Americans as she should have been, she was on a line with Matzenauer, Schumann-Heink, and Onegin. Hamburg was for many years the center of her activities, and she appeared for several seasons at Bayreuth. She sang in America during the season of 1914-15, in concert, when she made her one American Columbia record. Later, she returned twice to America with the German Opera Company of Sol Hurok. The first time was in the famous 1922-23 season, which introduced to America Schorr, Kipnis, Edythe Fleischer, Meta Seinemeyer and so many other important singers. The second time was in 1929, when she appeared in *Tristan und Isolde* with Gadski. Her Brangäne was then much admired, and many reviews singled her out as the best singer in the company. She married the bass-baritone Theodor Lattermann in 1911, who died young — in 1926. Her records are not well known in the States, but her Parlophones and Odeons turn up often in Europe. The former are the better recordings, but on Odeon she sang some rare arias, like those from *Odysseus* and *Achilleus* by Max Bruch. She also recorded for German H.M.V. In the latter are included duets with Melanie Kurt and others.

Other Victims

Similar victims of the gas-chambers of Theresienstadt were the famous operetta singers **Mia Werber** and **Therese Rothauser.** The former created the *Geisha* in Germany (her recordings are on G&Ts and Parlophone). The latter was a contralto who sang small roles with the Berlin Opera (she is Annina on the *Rosenkavalier* record with Paul Knüpfer.)

Further casualties of recent years, which have come to my attention only recently, include the Dutch tenor **Hendrik Appels,** who made his whole career in Germany (records on Vox and Tri-Ergon). He died in 1947. Also the young Frankfurt tenor **Jacob Sabel** (1911-1950) who sang some medleys for Odeon during the war, and **Frida Langendorff** who sang two seasons at the Metropolitan — 1907-08 and 1910-11. She died in New York in 1947.

At long last I have found out for certainty what happened to **Luise Reuss-Belce,** the great Wagnerian singer so long associated with Bayreuth as Fricka, and later as a producer. She sang at the Metropolitan from 1901 to 1903. Her only recording was a Mapleson cylinder (with Gadski) from *Lohengrin,* issued by IRCC. At the age of 81 she fled from Dresden after the terrible bombardment, dying on her way south on February 12, 1945. She was buried in Aichbach, near Augsburg.

Letter From Paris

▲French collectors need no longer look with longing eyes toward the American LP catalogues. As of the new year the domestic companies are offering items which might well make the surfeited American collector sit up and take notice. Columbia has issued its complete *Meistersinger,* as well as a new recording of the Fauré *Requiem* on a single disc conducted by Andre Cluytens, the man who made the recent *L'Enfance du Christ* of Berlioz such a compelling experience. La Voix de son Maitre (French H.M.V.) offers the final scene from *Götterdämmerung* with Flagstad and Furtwängler, coupled with the fourth scene of the second act of *Walküre* with Flagstad, Svanholm and Karl Böhm. Decca offers its complete *Bohème* with Renata Tebaldi and G. Pranelli, as well as Kathleen Long's performances of Ravel's *Tombeau de Couperin* and *Sonatine. Oiseau-Lyre* has issued Handel's cantata *Apolo e Dafne* with Margaret Ritchie, Bruce Boy-

on and Anthony Lewis, as well as more of he exquisite *Chants de la France* of Canteloube, with the soprano Lucie Daullene and the composer as pianist.

Pathé-Marconi has announced manufacture of an *Anthologie internationale de la Musique contemporaine*, under the auspices of the *Conseil International de la Musique*, with the cooperation of *UNESCO*. The works first released are the *Poèmes Hindoux* of Maurice Delage and the *Etudes de rythme* of Olivier Messiaen. Describing the latter, one critic wrote: "Messiaen establishes a certain number of nuances from *pp* to *ff*. . . Combinations of them are arranged in appreciable formal elaboration with his rhythmic and melodic series. . . these three kinds of 'rhythm' have major possibilities. . . the end result is the kind of piano writing, suitable for the pianola, that Stravinsky must have dreamed of in *Les Noces*." The next works to be recorded are a quartet by the young Brazilian composer, Camargo Guarnieri, and some works by Luigi Dallapiccola and the American, Lukas Foss.

German Releases

A new import, just released in France, is the collection of contemporary German music originally recorded by *Dahlemer Musik-Gesellschaft Berlin*. Originally available only to libraries and state departments, the collection is now on the market through courtesy of Polydor.

The first release, already out in France, is a small suite from Werner Egk's music for the sensational German ballet of a few years back, *Abraxas*. Little by little this man's music is occupying a deserved place in the orchestral repertoire. Recently two more works were released in America by Urania, the *Geigenmusik* and the delightful *Suite Francaise* — the latter reminds one of Roussel if one can imagine a German version of that thoroughly French composer.

By comparison with *Abraxas* the rest of the collection seems a bit dull. The more interesting works are Hartmann's *Fourth Symphony* and Henze's *Ballet Variations*, inspired, apparently, by Webern. Boris Blacher's *Rondo for Piano and Orchestra* is interestingly neo-Stravinskian and the finale from Fortner's *First Symphony* shows, here and there, an amount of originality. The choral excerpts from Pepping's *Heut und Ewig* and *Grezen der Menschheit*, as well as Carl Orff's *Carmina Burnana* for tenor and orchestra seem, to me at any rate, of much less interest. The collection, recorded by the *Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft Hannover*, is a model of contemporary engineering and Fricsay conducting the RIAS Symphony of Berlin creates a number of compelling interpretations.

A Russian Opus

Among the other importations is a recent release by *Chant du Monde* of Shostakovitch's oratorio, *Le Chant des Forets*, on poems of Dolmatovski. On a single LP disc, the work, recorded in the Soviet Union, is large without being particularly long. Neither does it seem particularly chauvinistic even though it is concerned with things like pioneers planting trees and the finale is called *Ceux de Stalingrad*. The critics are in raptures over it, one going so far as to say, "Taking advantage of an art which he today possesses completely, Shostakovitch has here composed one of the most important works, not only in this form, but also in all contemporary music."

The very best of the newer shellac recordings is a performance by Gerard Souzay and the vocal Quintette de l'Ile-de-France of Andre Campra's delightful *cantate francaise*, *Les Femmes*. Campra, who somewhat influenced Rameau, is all too little known, even in France. This work, wonderfully performed, should remedy matters. Since it has been recorded and issued by Anthologie Sonore, discs 161-2, appreciation of it will not be limited to France alone.

In the popular field the newest sensation is one worthy of notice. She is Juliette Greco who has just recorded two songs, *Amours perdus* and *La belle vie*, for Philips. Of her no less astute a pioneer than Cocteau, who originally saw her as queen of the bacchantes in his film,

Orphée, has said: "Women who really rule in the bars and cabarets are most unusual. We have before us all of Montmartre, Montparnasse and Saint-Germain-des-Prés as examples. Yet, even before she so pleases us with her gravely beautiful voice, she reigns through reason of her presence alone. All is comprehended. . . in her black silhouette, so similar to those of young girls in the frescos of Crete. And yet, under the apparent austerity of her appearance she has hidden a ruined jewel, that best of possessions, a heart of gold."

These remarks, so indicative of Cocteau's enthusiasm, tell us, among other things, that a new singer is coming into popular appreciation, and one well worth watching. —*Raol Deindich*

Operas --- New and Old

BERG: *Wozzeck*; **Mack Harrell** (Wozzeck), **Frederick Jagel** (Drum Major), **Joseph Mordino** (Captain, Soldier, Idiot), **David Lloyd** (Andres), **Ralph Farrell** (Marie), **Edwina Eustis** (Margaret), **Bess Ann Herdt** (Marie's Child), Children's Chorus: **Members of High School of Music and Art Chorus,** Chorus of **The Schola Cantorum** directed by **Hugh Ross,** and the **Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra of New York** conducted by **Dimitri Mitropoulos.** Columbia LP set SL-118, 2 discs, $10.90.

▲THIS PERFORMANCE of Berg's opera is a composite of the best portions of three performances of *Wozzeck* that Mitropoulos, the Philharmonic Orchestra, and the various singers listed above gave in New York on April 12, 13, and 15, 1951.

It is unfortunate that an English translation of the opera's text is not available, but one may be forthcoming from England shortly as a result of performances that will be staged at Covent Garden.

It would be difficult to imagine a more dedicated or eloquent presentation of the music than Mitropoulos and his co-workers give here. All concerned have apparently searched into every dark corner of this fascinating score to give us a complete representation of the tragedy of Johann Franz Wozzeck, "thirty years and seven months old, militiaman and fusilier . . . uneducated, uncomprehending," the regimental servant of the Captain.

Aside from the three fragments (of which there are two recordings), *Wozzeck* will be completely unfamiliar to most listeners. For that reason, it should be stated here that this music is not entirely made with the twelve-tone row but, on the contrary, seems to consolidate the classical, diatonic procedures (a link with the past) with Schoenberg's twelve-tone system. Chromatic harmonies, in popular use during the 19th century, are indeed as common as the atonal accoutrements one encounters. It is interesting to note that Willi Reich, Berg's biographer, has pointed out that the first act of *Wozzeck* is made up of such familiar forms as a suite, a rhapsody, a passacaglia, a rondo, etc., that the second is a symphony in five movements, that the third and final act is actually five inventions.

I have mentioned these things to illustrate the infinitely varied character of this opera and the fact that the music refuses to be pigeonholed. Much study with great reward can be spent on these aspects, to be sure. What almost everyone will find, I believe, is that *Wozzeck* is clear and that it has the power to move.

So much for the music. As far as the vocal fans go, they will not want to miss the resonant singing of Mack Harrell and Eileen Farrell. And for those who are interested in dramatic characterization, the business of acting all the time with the voice, Harrell, Farrell, Joseph Mordino, and almost everyone else will give the listener human, dynamic qualities all too rare either on records or in musical theaters today. Above all, however, is the penetrating spirit of Mitropoulos. It is his great strength and passion for this music that has moulded all the separate elements into a rich and memorable experience.

Columbia's engineers have done the job that this project deserved. Here are two discs which everyone ought to hear.

—C.J.L.

SCARLATTI: *Il Trionfo dell' Onore* (Opera buffa); **Amedeo Berdini** (Riccardo), **Amalia Pini** (Leonora), **Mario Borriello** (Erminio), **Rossana Zerbini** (Doralice), **Sante Messina** (Flaminio), **Ornelia Rovero** (Cornelia), **Eugenia Zareska** (Rosina), **Afro Poli** (Captain), **Orchestra of Radio Italiana** conducted by **Carlo Maria Giulini.** Cetra-Soria LP set, 2 discs, $11.70.

▲CETRA-SORIA'S recording of Alessandro Scarlatti's *Il Trionfo dell' Onore* is not only a matter of delightful listening, but also an historically important release.

Antedating Pergolesi's *La Serva Padrona* by 15 years, Scarlatti's only comic opera among 110 operatic scores, was first given in Naples at the Teatro dei Fiorentini on November 26, 1718.

Listening to the fine recitatives with harpsichord accompaniment, and to the beautifully shaped arias and duets, one agrees with the three-act-opera's most distinguished enthusiast, Edward J. Dent, who was justified in feeling that this *opera buffa* belongs in the modern reportoire. London finally heard a performance of *Il Trionfo* in 1938.

This score has great variety of mood, with moments of sprightly gayety in the true *opera-buffa* manner alternating with grave and stately passages that will bring both Gluck and Handel to mind.

The story is as complicated and silly as most plots of the period are apt to be, but we are assured that honor has its innings at the final curtain, and the excellent libretto, included in the album, makes it easy and amusing to follow these 18th-century conceits.

An extremely able cast of singers has been here assembled under the baton of Carlo Maria Giulini. Old Cetra-Soria favorites such as Amalia Pini, Afro Poli, Ornella Rovero and others add new laurels in new roles. Only the tenor, Amedeo Berdini suggests that he was more at home in the romantic surges of Avito's music in *L'Amore dei Tre Re* than in this stylistically demanding music. —M. de S.

Mozart Superbly Performed

MOZART: *Concerto No. 24 in C minor, K.491; Concerto No. 27 in B flat, K.595*; **Paul Badura-Skoda** (piano), **Vienna Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Felix Prohaska.** Westminster LP disc WL-5097, $5.95.

▲YOUNG Badura-Skoda (he is 24) will make his American debut in 1953, in our concert halls and with our symphony orchestras. It is at once a feather in Westminster's cap that it discovered and promulgated this youthful genius on records and brought his artistic prowess to the attention of a wider world than the few European countries where he has played. True, he was recognized as a genius at 20 when he was awarded first prize at the Austrian Music Competition (1947), and



Paul Badura-Skoda

later, when he was awarded prizes at the International Music Competitions held in Budapest in 1948, and in Paris in 1949. The critical praise bestowed upon this artist in his European tours during the past three years has been fabulous, but his fame would seem to have been more securely established by his recordings for Westminster. Few of us, who have lived with his irridescent piano playing in Westminster's recording of Schubert's *Trout Quintet*, need to be told of his youthful verve and expressive feeling.

We have already had samples of his affinity with the music of Mozart in Westminster's duo-piano recordings and in several concertos, issued by Westminster and by Oceanic. However, it seems to me that in the present works he is better represented, with more sympathetic orchestral direction. What I like about these recordings of two of Mozart's greatest concertos is the quality of the performances, which effect a chamber style without the thin ensemble that we had in Kirkpatrick's version of the *G major Concerto, K.453* (Haydn Society 1040). The solo instrument is never overshadowed by the instrumental ensemble, it is instead the main protagonist of the assembly. Badura-Skoda abstains from virtuosity, permitting his technical perfection to speak for itself in consistently expressive playing. I think his feeling for style in these works is eminently correct, especially in his understanding of and feeling for classic tranquillity. Of the greatly admired performances of these works issued in times past was the Edwin Fischer version of the *C minor* and the Schnabel one of the *B flat*. Though Badura-Skoda has studied in recent years with Edwin Fischer and undoubtedly absorbed much knowledge in his understanding and engrossment with the music of Mozart, I find his playing of the *C minor* owns a greater charm than that of his eminent teacher. In the intimacy of his approach, the smooth flow of his playing rises to climaxes without exceeding the bounds of the composer's intentions. Mozart himself is said to have performed his concertos in this manner. In the *B flat* — Mozart's farewell to the concerto form — he achieves the happiest realization of its power and restraint. Moreover, the pace of his slow movement does not retard its true rhythmic flow as Schnabel's did, and in the opening movement and finale his expressive runs are never brittle like his predecessor's were. I have waited long years to obtain a recording of one of my favorite concertos played in this manner.

I have already intimated that Prohaska is a cooperative conductor. Indeed, he is a true partner in the right manner and always in agreement with his soloist's feelings for the music, which was not the case in the orchestral direction in the concertos issued by Oceanic. As a recording, this rates with the finest of Westminster's recent outputs and does not need fancy words to describe its excellence. —P.H.R.

The Art of Egon Petri

SCHUBERT (transcriptions by Liszt and Tausig): *The Trout*; *Barcarolle*; *Margaret at the Spinning Wheel*; *The Linden Tree*; *The Erl-King*; *Andante and Variations*; *Love's Message*; *Soirées de Vienne*; **Egon Petri** (piano). Columbia disc ML-4436, $5.45.

▲LISZT, believe it or not, devised his piano arrangements of Schubert's music in an endeavor to popularize his songs. The late Albert Lockwood, who spent a lifetime to awaken students into a wider appreciation of the piano literature, wrote a book called Notes on the *Literature of the Piano* (now out of print), which did a lot to stimulate a sound reassessment of piano music among professional pianists and critics. He, like others who have delved deeply into their subject (Tovey among them), caused me to look up and become acquainted with a lot of piano music which I might not have otherwise known or appreciated. Lockwood made me realize that "the song transcriptions

(Continued on page 164)

Record Notes and Reviews

THERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.

—William Cowper

Orchestra

BARTOK: *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celeste*; **The Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Herbert von Karajan.** Columbia LP disc ML-4456, $5.45.

▲THIS release was brought out in England in May 1951 under the auspices of the Maharaja of Mysore's Musical Foundation. The Capitol recording by Harold Byrnes and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra had already been available for eight months. There is question in my mind that English critics were justified in their preference for the latter, as von Karajan's reading of this complicated score carries less conviction than Byrnes'. The former seems rather cautious in his approach to the music and for all his efficiency in orchestral direction his performance carries little weight. Moreover, despite the fine range of the reproduction, the recording lacks essential resonance, which is found in the recent Kubelik-Chicago Symphony version (Mercury 50001). While I have admiration for the Byrnes performance, I find the Kubelik one more vital and forward moving. I agree with those who contend that this most original score, with its superb dynamics and fascinating instrumentations, is best served by a large orchestra rather than a chamber ensemble, though I believe the work was originally intended for chamber ensemble. —P.H.R.

BEETHOVEN: *Grosse Fugue, Op. 133*; **PURCELL:** *London Fugue*; *Three-Part Fantasias*; **Vienna Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Litschauer.** Vanguard disc VRS-419, $5.95.

▲THE SUPPOSED virtue of playing the *Great Fugue* with amplified strings, rather than string quartet (its original form) is primarily ease of execution. The piece cannot satisfactorily be played by four strings (so runs the argument). In addition, they say, Beethoven's conception was orchestral, so why not use an orchestra? There is something to be said for that point of view. Unless a string quartet is virtually an otherworldly ensemble, it cannot begin to dig into so formidable a work as the *Great Fugue*. But, then again, unless the strings of an orchestra are a virtuoso group, *they* cannot match up to the demands either; and the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, whatever its serious intentions and undoubted musicianship, is not a virtuoso ensemble. The tone sounds rough, and the beginning of the work has

that same strained quality that is heard when the average string quartet tussles with it.

The going is easier for the Vienna Chamber Orchestra in the Purcell pieces, where the technical problems are not so great. Litschauer and his men present a reverent reading, even if the proportions are a little out-sized. Purcell, after all, conceived his fantasias for string quintet, and the delicate tonal juxtapositions implicit in the original scoring are rather lost in the present version. —H.C.S.

CHAUSSON: *Symphony in B flat, Op. 20*; **The San Francisco Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Pierre Monteux.** RCA Victor LP disc ML-1181, $5.72.

▲HERE is a very rich, warm, resonant performance. The tragic overtones hidden in Chausson's recurring motives seem to be more adequately delivered than in the Mitropoulos version (Columbia LP ML-4141). The San Francisco Symphony sounds much better here than it has in recent performances.

The recording is excellent. —S.K.

CURTAIN TIME: *Morton Gould and his Orchestra*; Columbia LP disc, ML 4451, $5.45.

▲HERE is another disc containing arrangements of hit show-tunes by Morton Gould. As always, they are very professional, nicely spirited and quite slick. In this collection is *Bewitched* from *Pal Joey*; *What Is There To Say* from the *Ziegfield Follies of 1933*; *Poor Pierrot* from *The Cat and the Fiddle*; *Mine* from *Let 'Em Eat Cake*; the famous *September Song* from *Knickerbocker Holiday*; *So in Love* from *Kiss Me, Kate* and an excellent number from Gould's score for the neglected *Billion Dollar Baby* called *Bad Timing*. Most of the items have been arranged for piano and orchestra, the conductor playing the solo instrument very capably. The recording is excellent. —D.R.

DVORAK: *Symphony No. 5 in E minor, Op. 95 (From the New World)*; **The New Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Enrique Jorda.** London LP disc LLP-432, $5.95.

▲TO resort to slang, this is a wow of a recording — out of the topmost drawer of London's *ffrr* cabinet. Its realism, its glorious instrumental sounds, its sensational dynamics are virtues that will be admired by all who are swayed by outstanding reproduction. The performance, however, is highly individual, with an exaggeration of dynamics which too often disturbs the continuity of the music. It gives the effect of the music being broken up into shorter sentences than Dvorak intended.

For my own part, the Stokowski version (Victor LM-1013) remains the best on LP, not alone as a performance but as a most satisfyingly realistic recording. Its one competitor is a performance by Alceo Galliera on British Columbia (not yet available on LP). —P.H.R.

DEBUSSY: *La Mer*; **MENDELSSOHN:** *A Midsummer Night's Dream — Incidental Music*; **NBC Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Arturo Toscanini.** RCA Victor LP disc LM-1221, $5.45 (also 45 rpm set WDM-1683, $3.80).

DEBUSSY: *La Mer*; **Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of N. Y.** conducted by **Dimitri Mitropoulos:** *Ibéria (Images, Set III, No. 2)*; **Philadelphia Orchestra** conducted by **Eugene Ormandy.** Columbia LP disc ML-4434, $5.45.

▲TOSCANINI'S performance of *La Mer* has been awaited these many years in a recording. Long admired in the concert hall and on the airways and widely praised by many critics, his interpretation is at times almost startlingly individual to those brought up on the French tradition of playing this score. It was the late Lawrence Gilman who said that Toscanini "made us understand *La Mer* in a new and revelatory light . . . It left me, as it left others who also thought they knew

La Mer, dazed and incoherent and incredulous. We had been listening to *La Mer* in America for almost twenty years before we heard it first from Toscanini: but only then were its images and its voices summoned with plenary power from the wraithlike waters of that phantasmal sea." Extravagant praise, some musicians have said of Gilman's words, for in the Toscanini interpretation they heard rhythmic beats and dynamics never stressed before.

There are those who still contend that the late Koussevitzky's reading was the finest ever recorded — a vital rendition closest to the French tradition. Be that as it may, comparison with it and the Mitropolous reading (almost overly cautious in its observance of the music's unfoldment) instantly reveals why the Toscanini version has captured the imagination and admiration of listener and critic. There is a rhythmic urge that instantly sets the scene and gives one the feeling that this music — so often vaguely treated — is going somewhere in its direction. Moreover, the interpretation has an excitement which one feels certain Debussy must have felt when he wrote the music. The Mitropoulos version has richer sounding reproduction and much of the instrumentation has a finer quality of sound, notably the playing of the horns of the Philharmonic-Symphony, but in the final summation one feels the magic of evocation belongs to Toscanini. (The program notes by Rachel L. Carson on the Victor envelope offer quite a different interpretation of the music than either Toscanini or Mitropoulos achieve. Though skillful but fanciful writing, it seems inappropriate here.)

Toscanini's much admired interpretation of the Mendelssohn music has been successfully transferred to LP.

The beauty of the Philadelphia Orchestra's playing in the Ormandy-conducted *Ibéria* is far ahead of any other version of this music on record. But Ormandy's interpretation just misses being a true reproduction of this magical score. While the performance is neat and tidy and metronomically correct, it lacks essential nuance in rhythm. As a recording it is wonderful in sound with equitable dynamics and essential realism. —P.H.R.

FALLA: *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*; Clifford Curzon (piano) **with New Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Enrique Jorda; *The Three Cornered Hat — Scenes and Dances from Part I*; London Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Enrique Jorda.** London LP disc LLP-445, $5.95.

▲BOTH of these recordings were previously released on 78 rpm. In the present release the *Nights* is a new recording while the latter is an adaption from the 78 edition. There is, in my estimation, better clarity of detail in the new *Nights* though the overall sound has not quite the same brilliance of the former issue. The *Three Cornered Hat* excerpts also lack some of the original brilliance though I find the mellowness of the LP version an estimable asset. In both cases the quality of reproduction proves eminently satisfactory on extended range equipment.

Jorda is especially happy in his interpretations of de Falla's music which demands sensuous beauty, intense coloration and wide dynamics. The *Nights* — three entrancing nocturnes — evoke impressions of different Spanish gardens. This work is not a concerto nor is it program music. J. B. Trend in his book on de Falla has said: "In the *Noches* we wake suddenly into the middle of a vivid dream, as if the music had been there already, going on for some time, before we become aware of it." Of the several recorded performances this one with the soloist seemingly "concealed by a modesty" is closer to de Falla's manner of playing the music. In the recently issued Rubinstein-Goldschmann version, the pianist was more conspicuous — thus making the work sound more like a concerto. Despite Rubinstein's tonally superb playing, Curzon's delicacy and refinement remain eminently satisfying. Though some think this music is made more interesting when

played in more virtuosic manner by the soloist — "this is not so," as Trend has said. —P.H.R.

HAYDN: *Symphony No. 94 in G (Surprise)*; *Symphony No. 103 in E flat (Drum Roll)*; **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham.** Columbia LP disc ML-4453, $5.45.

▲OF THE several performances of both these symphonies on LP, Beecham's are distinguished for their graciousness and flexibility of movement. The tempos in each work are judiciously chosen to bring out tonal coloration, spontaneity and consistent beauty of tone. His outer movements move freely with none of the machine-like rush that some conductors pursue and his minuets have the right bounce and swing. Of the previous versions of the "Surprise" on LP only the Schmidt-Isserstedt (Capitol) has revelatory interpretative qualties of similar consideration. The Beecham version is, however, better recorded.

Haydn's "Drum Roll," so called because of the roll on the kettledrum at the opening of the introduction and at the close of the movement, seems to have come into its own on records only since LP materialized. It is one of his finest symphonies written for his London visit, and Haydn is said to have called it his best. One of the composer's more meditative symphonies, as Geiringer says, it has both grace and vigor. Its finale recalls Mozart's "Jupiter," and its minuet with its scotch-snap has much of the characteristics of a peasant dance. Of the previous recordings, Scherchen's is particularly imposing with its majestic fortissimos though more solidly played than Beecham's. The present reading has more refinement of detail and closer collaboration with the orchestra. As a recording it does not top the Scherchen though it is a fine example of British engineering with proper liveness and clarity of detail. Curiously, it is on a slightly higher dynamic level than the "surprise." —P.H.R.

NIELSEN: *Symphony No. 3, Op. 27 (Sinfonia Espansiva)*; **Radio Symphony Orchestra, Copenhagen,** conducted by **Erik Tuxen,** with **Inger Lis Hassing** (soprano) and **Erik Sjoeberg** (baritone). London LP dsic LLP-100, $5.95.

▲WHEN this recording was first available in this country, in July 1949 (on 78 rpm discs), our reviewer, Anson W. Peckham said of this work: "Even for those familiar with the scope of Nielsen's style and temperament this set will be a breathtaking revelation of the hidden riches in this composer's output. Subsequent hearings have confirmed the depth of the hitherto undiscovered lode, causing one to wonder how so powerful a score could have failed to gain renown in the quarter century and more since its conception. . . The Danish composer's music stems from the late romantic school, Mahler's classroom exerting an important influence. This *Third Symphony* . . . for purposes of concise description, might be said to be English in character. One could point out the rich, sonorous orchestration of an Elgar, the lyric fervor of a Vaughan Williams, the rhythmic intensity of a Holst. The various elements of Nielsen's style, however, are so fused into a personalized unity that cries of 'eclectic' are practically snuffed out. Add to these cheerful considerations a performance that borders on perfection, enregistered by an enlightened engineer using the best of modern equipment. Especially noteworthy is the gorgeous quality of the trombones in the second movement, where soprano and baritone solo voices are additional features."

There is little to add to the above except to say this truly facinating work suggests absorption with nature. Its subtitle "expansive" might derive from a freedom of mood inspired by the country. Nielsen (1865-1931) is one of Denmark's most distinguished composers in modern times — a decided individualist despite the fact that he did not "break the bounds of tradition." Many of his works have been recorded recently but this is the first

to be made available on LP. The transference has been competently handled by London's engineering staff. —P.H.R.

OFFENBACH: *Overtures* to *La Belle Hélène, Orpheus, Le Marriage aux Lanternes, Barbe-Bleu,* and *La Grand-Duchesse de Gérolstein*; **London Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Jean Martinon.** London LP disc LLP-350, $5.95.

▲THE MELODIC charm and wit of Offenbach is irresistibly associated with his music from the opening bars of his overtures. Too few of Offenbach's operettas survive in the theatre today. The manner in which he sets the stage, so to speak, in these overtures makes one wish more of his works could be heard in their entirety. Martinon is a sensitive conductor who wisely does not refute charm of sentiment along with accentuating the "high spirits" of the composer's music. The overture to *Barbe-Bleu,* new to me, proved most interesting and gave me cause to wonder how Offenbach had handled this famous villian. It is an innocuous charm not expected. The resonantly live reproduction, is appropriate to this music. ▲J.N.

RIMSKY-KORSAKOFF: *Le Coq d'Or — Suite*; **FRANCK:** *Le Chasseur Maudit*; **Royal Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Sir Thomas Beecham.** Columbia LP disc ML-4454, $5.45.

▲THESE are fine accomplishments by Sir Thomas. The refinement of his interpretative artistry, the breath of feeling where required, the nuance of coloration and the rhythmic sensitivity — these are attributes of his music-making with which we are long familiar and which distinguish his performances of music of lesser status.

Franck's *Accursed Huntsman* is a dated tone poem with a 19th-century religious program that hardly commands respect these days — typical nonsense of its time. It is a completely naive work which came at a time (1882), when romanticism "was approaching its full expression." The

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Coq d'Or suite, on the other hand, beautifully orchestrated, evokes a decorative pattern of sound that is prismatic in its tonal coloring. Both works are realistically reproduced. —P.H.R.

STRAUSS: *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Tod und Verklärung*; **RCA Victor Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Reiner.** RCA Victor LP disc LM1180, $5.72.

▲SUCH a *Till* as Reiner presents here your reviewer has not heard anywhere since the composer's own version (circa 1934). It is ever so spontaneous, tempestuous, impish, riotous, and charming. Tightly controlled as to balance and pace, Reiner allows just enough rhythmic freedom to make old *Till* seem as enchanting as he was long ago. And that's quite a trick, for Till, by this time, has practiced his merry pranks before many a listener on a good many occasions.

Tod und Verklärung is a piece that is growing old. It sounds faded and its devices are familiar. Only when a conductor eschews bathos, keeps away from roughouse orchestral virtuosity, and plays the work as serious melodrama does it makes its points. And even then one must have careful grading of dynamics, a smooth ebb and flow from one peroration to the next. Reiner accomplishes all these things in a more or less effective manner. His interpretation, together with some skilled orchestral playing, provides the best *Tod und Verklärung* we have yet on records. It will not, however, completely hold the attention of those who have been familiar with the extraordinary performances of this music by either Toscanini or Walter.

The recording is mostly good; the surfaces agreeable. —C.J.L

SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 43.* Victor LP disc LM-1172, $5.72.

WAGNER: *Siegfried Idyll*; **STRAUSS:** *Don Juan, Op. 20.* Victor LP disc LM-1177, $5.72. Both by the **Boston Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Serge Koussevitzky.**

▲SHORTLY before his death on June 4, 1950, Koussevitzky made the recordings of Wagner's *Siegfried Idyll* and Sibelius' *Second Symphony.* Only the Strauss tone poem was issued on 45 and 78 rpm discs before his death. It has wonderful vitality with an especially electrifying opening, but in the later sections of the score Toscanini eclipses Koussevitzky.

Koussevitzky seems to have had a fondness for the Sibelius *Second*, which he recorded sixteen years ago. At that time, Victor was experimenting with greater fidelity and dynamics, and Koussevitzky's searching performance was widely hailed. This new recording has not quite the overall stamina of the earlier one, yet it still conveys the conductor's sustained absorption with the spirit of the music and the care and finesse he brought to his orchestral direction. RCA Victor released a performance of this work by Beecham on 45 rpm discs which deserves to be transferred to LP It is in many ways a more vivid and penetrating reading.

For finesse and sensuous beauty of tone, Koussevitzky's *Siegfried Idyll* leads all the rest. And yet, the gentleness of this famous Christmas serenade seems lost — just as it does in Toscanini's more vital performance. Rodzinski seems to be the only one, since Walter made his version with an unidentified orchestra, who brings true gentleness and intimacy to his reading — perhaps because he played especially in honor of his son's birth. One would like to have heard the first performance of this work, conducted on the stairs at Triebschen by Wagner for a birthday greeting to his wife. One suspects there was a gentleness in his playing.

All of the above are fine reproductions of the Boston Orchestra — acoustically live and realistic. —P.H.R.

STRAVINSKY: *Petrouchka*; **Leopold Stokowski and His Orchestra.** RCA Victor LP disc LM-1175, $5.72.

▲IT SEEMS self-evident on the face of this and the recent Mitropoulos recordings that Victor and Columbia set out to dup-

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licate, if not to surpass, London's realism in its reproduction of this work. There is no doubt that extended range was planned and fully exploited in both cases, but it seems to me that Victor — under the guidance of Stokowski, the true grandfather of high-fidelity in records — has exploited highs in a most vivid and blatant manner. Stokowski has apparently seated his orchestra with the idea of obtaining the largest lifelike sound possible from his woodwinds and brasses. This results in some super-brilliance of wind-instrument tone which often results in shrillness not heard in the concert hall. I can imagine that with many technicians, in order to display equipment for those listeners who are completely swayed by such sounds on the high end, this recording will become a challenger to the Ansermet one.

If the Mitropoulos version of *Petrouchka* was unexpected and a far cry from the traditional manner of playing the score which Ansermet and the composer have followed, Stokowski's version is equally individual. The composer and Ansermet unquestionably think of this music in relation to the ballet theatre, while Stokowski and Mitropoulos, in my estimation, think of it as a concert-hall showpiece. Both exhibit their amazing orchestral virtuosity throughout the entire score — and it should be said that Stravinsky has provided them with ample opportunities to do just this. But the music does not hold together in quite the way that one knows who is familiar with it in the theatre. Stokowski points up every detail like an organist might if he could handle his many organ-stops quick enough to obtain such varied results. It is all very electrifying in sound (no pun intended) but it tends to keep the rhythm from flowing as smoothly and as fluently as Ansermet's does. Much of the tonal sound seems unduly weighted. However, the coloration of Stravinsky's brilliant scoring becomes a far richer and more brilliant tonal palette. And here, the genius of Stokowski for this sort of thing is strikingly exploited. —P.H.R.

STRAVINSKY: *Le Sacre du Printemps*; **Boston Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Pierre Monteux.** RCA Victor LP disc LM-1149, $5.72.

▲THE KING is back on his throne (if only for a while). Yes, Pierre Monteux, the man who many claim built the Boston Orchestra (during his tenure from 1919-1924) into the stellar organization that it remains today, is back with those admirable players from Symphony Hall. And you cannot imagine what a delight that is until you hear this disc. There is no hesitation on my part in nominating this disc as the finest orchestral performance recorded during 1951. It is, to my mind, a history making record and I urge everyone to make its acquaintance.

We have had fine performances of Stravinsky's powerful masterwork before and very likely we shall have fine ones in the future, but I think Monteux's version will remain definitive for many years to come. Polished in execution, completely clear as to rhythm and metrics, sizzling in intensity, and absolutely savage in expression, this performance has everything.

It has the precision of the van Beinum version (London EDA-59), the fierceness of Stravinsky's (Columbia LP ML-4092), and the know-how of Ansermet (London LLP-303). It is in short a composite of all of these brilliant elements, which separately have given popularity and wide currency to the aforementioned versions, plus the love and understanding of the great Monteux (who, by the way, presented *Le Sacre du Printemps* to the world for the first time in 1914).

RCA Victor has done full justice to this memorable occasion by exhibiting engineering mastery of the highest known standards.

Now, how about some more Monteux-Boston LPs? —C.J.L.

WAGNER: *Music from Tristan and Isolde*; **Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra,** RCA Victor LM-1174, $5.45.

▲THIS is an older and more mellow Stokowski. Gone are blatant, over-rich,

ear-shattering sonorities; in their stead is a delicately balanced and deeply felt rendition of the Prelude, love music, and Liebestod from *Tristan and Isolde*, romantic rather than passionate. Entitled "A Symphonic Synthesis," it takes the above-mentioned sections in orderly progression presenting the Prelude and Liebestod in their entirety and using a portion of the love duet from Act 2 as a connecting link. The record is, therefore, not a chaotic jumble as were previous Stokowski "syntheses" such as the *Boris* of some years back. For those who have been able to develop a taste for vocal, especially operatic music played instrumentally, this record will be gratifying. The quality of the recording is excellent. —B.L.

Concerto

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 1 in C, Op. 15*; **Friedrich Gulda** (piano) and the **Vienna Philharmonic** directed by **Karl Böhm.** London disc LLP-000, $5.95.

BEETHOVEN: *Concerto No. 4 in G, Op. 58*; **Wilhelm Backhaus** (piano) and the **Vienna Philharmonic** directed by **Clemens Krauss.** London disc LLP-417, $5.95.

▲GULDA performs the *C major* Beethoven in a nice, relaxed, unhurried manner—a typical example of his neat, finished playing. The only LP competitor would be Gieseking's version on Columbia. I prefer the Gulda. He is perhaps a little weightier in his attack than Gieseking, without the latter's lilt and sparkle, but I disagree with Gieseking's ideas about the last movement, which he takes at a ridiculously slow tempo. Gulda, incidentally, uses Beethoven's own cadenza in the first movement. Beethoven composed three for this concerto, one of them of considerable length and with some unusual modulations. It is this long one that Gulda plays. Most pianists avoid it, wisely in my opinion, because its proportions are much too big for the movement.

Backhaus presents a lively, "springy" performance of the great *G major Concerto*. He is in good form here, and is aided by excellent recording. I cannot think of a better performance on LP discs. The Casadesus is small-scaled compared to it, and the Novaes was a disappointment to me because of her lack of *rapport* with Klemperer. The Rubinstein-Beecham version, like the present Backhaus, is in the grand manner, but it just misses the special authority that a pair of Beethoven specialists like Backhaus and Krauss present. —H.C.S.

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HAYDN: *Concerto in F major for Violin, Harpsichord and Strings*; **Jean Pougnet, Lionel Salter** and the **London Baroque Ensemble** conducted by **Karl Haas**; *Symphony No. 22 in E flat (The Philosopher)*; Same orchestra and conductor. Decca LP disc DL-9561, $5.95.

▲THE concerto is one of Haydn's secondary works, not necessarily second-rate, in which the violin and keyboard instrument alternately play the themes. There is a lively spirit to the outer movements and an expressive simplicity to the Largo. The work is excellently performed with a stylistic precision that one feels ideally suitable for true listening pleasure. The soloists are capable musicians, but only Pougnet is properly in focus — Salter (the admirable reviewer in *The Gramophone* who signs himself L.S.) is unfortunately relegated to the background which may be due to the fact that his left hand work doubles the bass strings.

The symphony was previously recorded by the Haydn Society with larger orchestra (see p. 362—July, 1950 issue). Here, it is performed by an ensemble of 15 players — in the manner of Haydn's time, according to the notes. While Mr. Haas's performance has attributes of ensemble unanimity and technical skill not found in the Sternberg version, somehow I miss the richer ensemble of the larger orchestra in the long opening "chorale" *Adagio* which gives the work its sobriquet. In the quicker sections, however, Haas's spirited direction has better precision of style than his predecessor. The present reproduction is the most realistic — a fact which makes one over-conscious of the size of the ensemble. —P.H.R

LALO: *Symphonie Espagnole, Op. 21*; **Jascha Heifetz** (violin) with **RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **William Steinberg.** RCA Victor 10″ LP disc LM-127, $4.45.

▲IF THE TOTAL number of recorded performances is any criterion, then Lalo's masterpiece must rank fourth among outstanding concerted works for the violin Only Beethoven's concerto, with 14 recordings, Mendelssohn's (13), and the Brahms (11) top Lalo's, which has been done nine times. Lalo has been singularly fortunate in the waxings of this opus. There are no really poor performances of it, and most recordings have been above the average for their times.

This opus — strictly speaking not a concerto but a suite for violin and orchestra is rarely performed in its entirety, the third movement, an Intermezzo, often being omitted, as it is in the Heifetz recording.

So far as concert performances have been concerned, there have been two approaches to this work — the heavier-handed and more sentimentalized Russian style and the smaller and finer, but musically more ample, manner of the Franco-Belgian school of violinistics.

In his interpretation, the impeccable Jascha lives up to his surname, Heifetz, which means "diamond." It is all fire and ice, with an adamantine hardness, polished by technical perfection, but without the warmth one would like to hear.

To a lesser extent, that Slavic flavor also marks Milstein's four-movement recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra under Eugene Ormandy, generally still available as a Columbia 78 rpm set (MM-564).

The only other LP version is also an RCA Victor LP disc (LM-1011) by Menuhin, who plays all five movements, with the Colonne Orchestra of Paris under Jean Fournet giving lively support. Menuhin's tone is well-rounded and suave, and his playing is graceful and flexible.

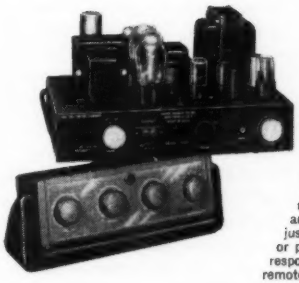
An older Columbia recording, hard to find these days, was that of Bronislaw Hubermann, with the Vienna Philharmonic under George Szell. There was some noble fiddlestickery in MM-214.

This reviewer's favorite performance, perhaps most idiomatic of all, is that of Zino Francescatti, with a French orchestra under Cluytens, available only on French Columbia discs (7 sides), LFX. 610/613, from the imported record shops —Rolfe E. Boswell

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RACHMANINOFF: *Concerto No. 3 in D minor*; **Vladimir Horowitz** (piano) with the **RCA Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Reiner.** Victor LP disc, LM 1178, $5.72.

▲THIS is a very fine show-piece for the virtuoso pianist. It is also truly symphonic in character and as music quite holds its own ground. The interpreting artist should combine the obvious pianism of the work with its considerable musical content. This is what Rachmaninoff did in his early recording (Victor M-710) and this is what Horowitz does not do in the present one. He has almost never played more brilliantly and his bravura, even for him, is uncommon. His technique is truly breathtaking but always at the expense of the concerto. He has turned it into a "show-off" piece and Reiner, with his tight, efficient conducting, hasn't helped matters any. Horowitz' earlier recording of the same work (Victor M-117) was quite different. There he was not so artful as to deliberately contrast in a most violent manner any two given dynamic readings nor did he transform the athletic final movement into an endurance race with the conductor. In contrast, his interpretation was as full of grace and lightness as the music itself. The present performance has all the drive and energy — and lightness — of a B-29. The recording does not sound very full — sounds as though a full orchestra's not being used — but it's good studio work. —D.R.

RACHMANINOFF: *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43*; **William Kapell** (piano) with the **Robin Hood Dell Orchestra of Philadelphia** conducted by **Fritz Reiner.** Victor 10″ LP, LM 126, $4.67.

▲THIS charming work is probably destined to live as long as any other of Rachmaninoff's works. It has a sardonic humor and an unabashed sentimentality which continue to delight long after the concertos and the larger orchestral works have palled. For a long time it has needed a recorded performance as alternatively wry and elegiac as Mr. Kapell gives it. He is not afraid to be as mercurial as the music, nor as frankly theatrical. Likewise he is not afraid of style — in the grand sense of the word — and is as diabolic and as elegant as anyone could wish for. His performance most resembles that of Rachmaninoff himself except that Kapell contributes a good-natured dispatch understandably missing from the composer's version.

Reiner is excellent, both supporting and abetting Mr. Kapell in his efforts. I have never heard the imaginative orchestration of the work set off so well. The recording is most lifelike. —D.R.

Chamber Music

BEETHOVEN: *Quartet in C, Op. 59, No. 3* and **SCHUBERT:** *Quartettsatz, Op. Posth.*; **Quartetto Italiano.** London LP disc LLP-321, $5.95. **BEETHOVEN:** *Quartet in C, Op. 59, No. 3* and *Quartet, Op. 14, No. 1*; **The New Music String Quartet.** Bartok Records LP disc BRS-909, $5.95.

▲QUARTETTO ITALIANO or The New Italian Quartet, as you choose, has been the most exciting string ensemble around New York this fall. Widely acclaimed by local critics for its superb unaminity of style and technique, Quartetto Italiano demonstrates these values to a fare-thee-well on this well-recorded London disc. It also displays, in this writer's view, an unusually limited dynamic range. It is true that these young Italian string players can clearly articulate about the lightest and softest sounds that one can recall, but it is just as true that their fortissimos are weak and without much body. Since only the widest dynamic range is suitable for the last ten Beethoven string quartets, there is a good deal of drama missing in this rendition of the third Rasoumovsky or ninth quartet. The lovely isolated movement by Schubert presented here fares a good deal better.

The New Music String Quartet is one of the finest quartets we have. Its performance of Beethoven's ninth quartet has just what the Quartetto Italiano's does not have — plentiful drive, bite, and a unique soaring quality. Unfortunately, however, its pacing is far too fast in all of the movements but the third for it to give a truly effective account of this popular work. I would suggest that the listener try the Pascal Quartet's performance on a Concert Hall LP before coming to a decision as to which recording of this music to buy.

The real novelty on this excellently recorded disc is Beethoven's arrangement of his piano sonata, Op. 14, No. 1 into string quartet form. Presented on records for the first time, it seems fully the equal of its source material and is beautifully played by The New Music String Quartet.

—C.J.L

BRAHMS: *Quintet in B minor, Op. 115*; **Reginald Kell** (clarinet) with **Fine Arts Quartet.** Decca LP disc DL-8532, $5.95.

▲I WONDER how many listeners — knowing the older Kell-Busch Quartet performance — will feel satisfied with this new one in which the ensemble has not the same depth and fulness of tone. Mr. Kell's own playing is consistently beautiful but more refined and less brilliant than in his former Victor set. His tone, however, does not always stand out from the ensemble in quite the same manner, though in many places it blends more smoothly. One is confronted with a paradox where familiarity in sound retards instant appreciation of the new tonal qualities. While the Fine Arts Quartet play with beauty of tone and greater fluidity than in some of their quartet performances on Mercury records, their style is rather tenacious at times and not as full-bodied or as assertive as was the Busch ensemble or the Stuyvesant Quartet. While the latter ensemble did not have as sensitive a clarinetist, the overall effect of that performance (Concert Hall LP disc 4) was nonetheless satisfying.

As recording honors are about equal between the present issue and the previous LP one by Gallodoro and the Stuyvesants, I would certainly recommend that those contemplating an LP version of this work — certainly one of Brahms's most beautiful chamber compositions — compare the two releases. Some of us, however, may be reluctant to part with the older Kell-Busch Quartet version, which someday may materialize on LP. —P.H.R.

HINDEMITH: *Kleine Kammermusik, Op. 24, No. 2*) **MILHAUD:** *La Cheminée du Roi René*; **IBERT:** *Trois Pièces Brèves*; **Fairfield Wind Ensemble.** Stradivari Records disc STR-606, $5.95.

▲THIS is the first appearance of the masterful little Hindemith work on an LP disc. There used to be a Columbia set (two ten-inch discs) played by the Wind Quintet of Los Angeles, which came out in 1939. That performance had more of a swing to it than the present interpretation, which is a shade too deliberate. It is a good job, in any case; and the music is well worth owning. The Ibert pieces, of which there is also a current recording by the New York Woodwind Quintet, are lightweight and agreeable. My preference inclines toward the present recording, which has a little more presence and decision (though the Esoteric version is quite good). Milhaud's *Cheminée du Roi René* is a pastoral affair full of the composer's formulae of dissonance lightly once over. It sounds so calculated today! Each of these three works enjoys fine recording. —H.C.S.

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HINDEMITH: *Trumpet Sonata*; *Trombone Sonata*; *Bassoon Sonata*; **Alex Wilson** (trumpet), **Roger Smith** (trombone), **Bernard Garfield** (bassoon) and **Theodore Lettvin** (piano). EMS LP disc 4, $5.95.

▲HINDEMITH'S sonatas for various instruments comprise one of his most important contributions. Among them the trumpet sonata, written in 1939, is a major work. In three movements, it not only realizes the potentialities of the solo instrument but also emerges as a work of both power and integrity. This is particularly true of the third movement, called *Music of Mourning*, an expressive and poignant elegy. Alex Wilson plays expertly, with all the loving care this music demands.

Both the other works have already made their appearance on LP. The 1938 bassoon sonata, which opens with one of Hindemith's loveliest movements, has been excellently performed by Leonard Sharrow (Oxford OR 301). I find the present performance, though competent, both hurried and lacking in any real grasp of the music. The entertaining trombone sonata, written ten years ago, has received a first-rate performance from Davis Shuman (Circle L-51-100). The present interpretation, while technically as good, is taken too fast and doesn't often contain the swaggering assurance inherent in both instrument and music.

The recording is realistic although, probably unavoidably, the brass instruments have been favored over the pianist. This is a bit unfortunate as the latter is excellent. —D.R.

KREUTZER, Conradin: *Grand-Septett in E Flat, Op. 62*; **Members of The Vienna Octet.** London LP disc LLP-420, $5.95.

▲THE envelope notes for this disc claim that this work "is of great value as an historical document, for it shows us the kind of music Beethoven's Viennese audiences expected their composers to write." And so it is. It should be of interest to the intellectually curious or historically minded listener.

Though a trifle on the dull side, this Grand Septett for string trio, double bass, bassoon, clarinet, and horn in six movements is well made and not a bit unpleasant in its foreshadowing of Mendelssohn. Conradin Kreutzer (born, Baden, 1780 — died Riga, 1849), the composer, was a German musician primarily interested in opera. At various periods in his life, he served as Kapellmeister at the royal courts of Würtemberg and Donaushinger and was Director of Music in Vienna at the Kärnthnerthor Theatre and at the Josephstadt Theatre.

The performance by members of the Vienna Octet and London's recording are exquisite. —C.J.L.

New 45 Replacements

SAINT-SAENS: *Introduction and Rondo Capriccioso*; **Jascha Heifetz** (violin) with **RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **William Steinberg.** RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3443, $1.10.

HUMPERDINCK: *Dream Pantomime* from *Hänsel and Gretel*; **RCA Victor Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Reiner.** RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3442, $1.10.

DRIGO: *Serenade*; **BEETHOVEN:** *Minuet in G, No. 2*; **Mischa Elman** (violin) with **Wolfgang Rosé** (piano). RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3444, $1.10.

SCHUBERT: *Ave Maria*; **NEVIN:** *The Rosary*; **Robert Shaw Chorale** with soloists and **Raymond Viola** (piano). RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3448, $1.10.

FOSTER: *Beautiful Dreamer*; *Old Folks at Home*; **James Melton with RCA Victor Orchestra and Chorus** conducted by **Frank Black.** RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3445, $1.10.

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▲HEIFETZ'S Saint-Saëns is still a superb performance, both brilliant and suave. It lacked competition until Francescatti recorded it, fortunately in an LP version. A Heifetz fan would not wish to miss this splendidly recorded disc, but those not swayed by one personality will do well to hear both performances before buying. Reiner's *Dream Pantomime* is less "dreamy" than some make it — almost too efficient a job. But it's a wonderful recording. . . Elman plays two old favorites of his and his admirers affectionately . . . The Shaw Chorale is heard in typical radio arrangements of two favorites . . . Melton's voice is not what it used to be. Crooks once sang *Beautiful Dreamer* more appealingly . . . Jan Peerce knows how to sustain a lyrical line like few other singers though he lacks the ability to sing softly where required. These latter records, like all above, are realistically reproduced. —J.N.

Keyboard

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in B flat, Op. 106* (Hammerklavier); **Friedrich Gulda** (piano). London disc LLP-122, $5.95.

BEETHOVEN: *Sonata in C sharp minor, Op. 27, No. 2 (Moonlight)*; *Sonata in A flat, Op. 110*; **Friedrich Gulda** (piano). London disc LLP-150, $5.95.

▲SOME very impressive piano playing is contained on these discs. Have we here the eventual successor to Artur Schnabel? Gulda, still in his twenties, is a remarkably talented young man. He has a mind of his own, a wonderful technique (better, indeed, than Schnabel's ever was), and complete musical integrity. He has, too, enough strength in his fingers — and in his musical conception — to sustain so impossibly difficult a piece as the *Hammerklavier*. Schnabel himself, in his Beethoven Society recording, couldn't; he had the conception, all right, but not the technique.

Gulda plays the *Hammerklavier* with infinite control and faithfulness to the printed page. One might disagree with him in some things. I do not think, for example, that in the *Scherzo* he gets the swinging, triplet feeling that Beethoven obviously wanted in the *B flat minor* section. But these are minor points; and when one hears the way in which Gulda takes the fugue — the dizzy tempo, the rhythmic clarity, the amazing left-hand independence and left-hand trills — it is obvious that a young master is at work. For in all the piano literature there is nothing more demanding than this fugue. Its length is overpowering, its figuration often completely unpianistic, and its polyphonic complexity is frequently maddening, as far as the pianist is concerned. The way in which Gulda has solved the musical and technical problems entitles him to a front rank among contemporary Beethoven pianists.

The recording is not too good. In fortissimo passages there are some rattles, and in the slow movement some wavering of the piano tone. The same general remarks could be applied to the recording of the companion disc, which in addition has an annoying background noise — an audible throb that does not help Gulda's playing at all.

His rendition of the *Moonlight* sonata is quiet, deliberate and not too emotional in the first two movements. In the finale he speeds things up, of course, and builds to an energetic climax. It is controlled rather than improvisatory piano playing, manly and virile throughout. The *A flat Sonata*, a much more severe musical test, has much the same characteristic as the *Hammerklavier* — superb piano playing *per se*, logic, intelligence, and a sustained emotional mood that brings out the dignity of the music without making it sound stuffy. —H.C.S.

BRAHMS: *Sonata in F minor, Op. 5*; **Artur Rubinstein** (piano). Victor disc LM-1189, $5.45.

▲IT IS good to hear a pianist with the romantic inclinations of Rubinstein play this sonata. Only too often when classical-minded pianists of the echt-German school tackle it, the work sounds like a hum-drum collection of platitudes that does everything but fall apart. Not even Rubinstein can convince me that this is great music (apart from the *scherzo* movement), but at least he keeps it moving under its own momentum. He is one of the few pianists I have ever heard who can maintain in it enough of a balance between tension and relaxation to keep interest alive. Furthermore, he somehow manages to make it sound pianistic. There is only one other LP recording — the Julius Katchen on London. That version, issued in February 1950, still remains a good interpretation, but it does not match this in pianistic excitement and maturity of conception. Rubinstein, too, has been given excellent recording by the Victor engineers. —H.C.S.

CHOPIN: *Nocturnes* (complete); **Artur Rubinstein** (piano). RCA Victor LP set LM-6005, 2 discs, $10.90 (also 45 rpm set).

▲BACK in the 1930s, Rubinstein recorded the complete *Nocturnes* in England — a set that many of us have cherished these many years. The noted pianist recently remade these works under modern recording conditions. The quality of the piano tone varies some in this new recording and, as one progresses through the set, it becomes apparent that the performances were made at different sessions and under slightly different microphone setups. At least, that is the way it seems to me. For the quality of the piano tone changes from a very brittle and percussive treble tone in the first side to more natural quality on succeeding sides. Modern recording of the piano tends to stress the percussive character of the instrument more than it did in the old days, but on the credit side it does permit tonal nuances to be achieved that were often in the past only approximated.

There was more beauty of tone and mellowness in Rubinstein's older 78 rpm set. There was also some finer and more intimate playing. Here, in some cases, he seems to have altered his interpretations through the years, but only one case proves less persuasive — this is his present performance of the *G minor Nocturne, Op. 15, No. 3* which is now played too much like a Russian song. Rubinstein today is more the objective artist than he was yesterday, but he is still a fine stylist and an expressive player. It is doubtful that any other contemporary pianist could have played all nineteen of these works more handsomely. Some of us, however, may prefer to remain with his older set — which is evidence of admiration and respect for the player with whose rich artistry we have lived intimately through the years. —P.H.R.

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Voice

BELLINI: *Norma—Casta diva*; **VERDI:** *Ctell)—Salce, salce*; **BOITO:** *Mefistofele—L'altra notte in fondo mare*; **VERDI:** *La Forza del Destino—Pace, pace mio Dio*; **VERDI:** *Il Trovatore — Tacea la notte placida*; **VERDI:** *La Forza del Destino—Madre, pietosa Vergine*; **Helen Traubel with RCA Victor Orchestra** conducted by **Arthur Fiedler.** RCA Victor LP 10″ disc LM-123, $4.45 (also 45 set, $3.80).

▲MISS TRAUBEL transposes all of these soprano arias down from one to two keys, thus concentrating on the rich mezzo-soprano range of her voice. It cannot be said that many of these selections are effective in transposition and Miss Traubel for all her conscientious efforts is not thoroughly at home in all this music. *Casta diva* sung two keys lower than intended loses its ethereal beauty and the *Trovatore* and *La Forza* airs lack essential dramatic emphasis without the original high tones. Miss Traubel should select a group of mezzo arias more in keeping with her vocal assets at this time. Excellent recording. —J.N.

CANTELOUBE: *Songs of the Auvergne*; **Madeleine Grey** (soprano) with an orchestra conducted by **Elie Cohen;** *Song at School* (harmonized by **Germaine Weill** and **Maurice Emanuel**); **Miss Grey, M. Blanquart** (flute) and an unnamed pianist. Columbia LP disc, ML 4459, $5.45.

▲THIS is double good news: the famous *Chants d'Auvergne* coupled with another Madeleine Grey recital — all on one LP. This issuing of Miss Grey's superb performance of Canteloube's extraordinary arrangements of folk-tunes from the Auvergne is the final step in the fantastic history of this recording. Originally made about twenty years ago, the French pressings very soon became collectors' items — as did the American Columbia discs which appeared later. The reputation of both the music and the artist grew to the extent that the recording became the number-one listener request on one of New York's largest radio stations and letters demanding re-pressing began to bombard Columbia. Several years ago they were re-issued on shellac and enjoyed a very brisk sale. Now they appear, for all time, on LP. The dubbing is phenomenally successful considering the age of the discs. If you don't know this delightfully pastoral music you owe it to yourself to do so at once.

Miss Grey's phenomenal voice is always matched by an alert and sensitive artistry which is so diverse and so dramatic that she communicates far more than the score — you can practically see her. Since she made very few recordings — only two Ravel song-cycles are outstanding I believe — this new recital which is almost unknown here is of extraordinary interest. From the sound of the recording I should guess it was made about the same time as the Canteloube songs, perhaps earlier for the originals worked with apparently caused even more of a dubbing problem. The music is a charming and sensitive arrangement of six little French folk-tunes. In them Miss Grey is both infinitely tender and triumphantly magnificent. —D.R.

LOTTE LEHMANN'S FAREWELL RECITAL. Pembroke LP set, one 10″ and one 12″ disc, $12.50.

▲On February 16, 1951, Lotte Lehmann gave her "farewell" recital to New York. None of the audience knew that this was to be her last appearance on the concert stage until she announced it in a speech at the end of her second group of lieder. That speech, surely one of the most touching and at the same time "delightful" valedictories to the stage to be preserved, is heard on these records. Also, the ingenuous remark at the end of her program — "I shall now try to sing *An die Musik*," which she was unable to complete because of her emotion. Such moments in the life of an artist are remem-

bered by the few rather than the many, and often become exaggerated in the telling in later years. Fortunately, Mme. Lehmann's friends banded together to issue this set to keep the record straight for posterity.

I believe that more singers should arrange for the preservation of their recitals before the public — not just "farewell" ones. For many great artists are stimulated and inspired by their audience. Such a singer was Lotte Lehmann. I find her singing in this recital more appreciative than any recording she has made in recent years. She is more relaxed — more inspired. Though in her opening *Widmung* by Schumann there is not the same spontaneity as that she brought to a recording of long years ago, there is an expressive beauty in her last interpretation that remains most appealing. Out of her five Schumann lieder, three were never previously sung on records by her — *Oh, ihr Herren, Standchen* and *Wer machte dich so krank*. Two songs of Mendelssohn — *Der Mond* and *Venetianisches Gondellied*, two by Cornelius — *Ein Ton* and *Wiegenlied*, and Wagner's *Traume* make up her second group. To my knowledge, the soprano never recorded the Mendelssohn or Cornelius lieder which she sings so sweetly here.

Her third group is all Franz lieder and her final group is all Schubert. Though she has recorded several of the Franz and all of the Schubert songs, I find her singing here more expressively composed — there is no doubt the occasion inspired her greatly. Those who know the sterling quality of Franz's lieder will welcome her renditions of the tender *Ständchen* and *Weisst du noch* and the charming *Dies und das*.

The realism of the fine recording with quiet plastic surfaces will make more than one listener feel that he or she attended that recital — an event that will live on and on, thanks to these records. Finally, I wish to pay tribute to Paul Ulanowsky, Mme. Lehmann's splendid accompanist — he is, indeed, as she has said in her speech, "the ideal accompanist." —P.H.R.

PATRICE MUNSEL SINGS STRAUSS WALTZES with **Arthur Fiedler** conducting the **RCA Victor Orchestra.** RCA Victor 10″ LP disc LM-139, $4.45.

▲MUNSEL steals the show in the Met's production of Johann Strauss' *The Bat*. She is a natural soubrette with a clear, ringing high voice. There have been many famous sopranos who have offered their vocal renditions of Strauss' waltzes on records and in the concert hall. Most have chosen to sing them in German. Miss Munsel choses to sing them in English, and therein lies her failure to bring the nuancing of line and phrase that Sembrich and Hempel — to name two of the cherished ladies of song in such music — brought to their versions. The English words heard in these renditions are rather trite and tend to break the music into shorter sections and thus make the soprano's singing seem on occasion quite disjointed. Vocal arrangements of Strauss' waltzes vary considerably, taking many liberties to suit the accomplishments of their protagonists. The ones used by Miss Munsel are not familiar to me and by no means the most appealing presented on records. There is a quality of youthful eagerness and vivacity in the soprano's singing which doubtless may please many. The recording is most realistic with Fiedler competently handling an assignment which must have altered many ideas he has had on the music. —J.N.

SCHOENBERG: *Pierrot Lunaire*; **Erika Stiedry-Wagner** (recitation), **Rudolf Kolisch** (violin and viola), **Stefan Auber** (cello), **Eduard Steuermann** (piano), **Leonard Posella** (flute and piccolo), **Kalman Bloch** (clarinet and Bass clarinet), **Arnold Schoenberg** (conductor). Columbia LP disc ML-4471, $5.45.

▲THIS RECORDING, originally sponsored by the League of Composers and now issued in Columbia's "Meet the Composer" series, was reviewed in October 1941. Though the advance in recording technique in the past decade is in the favor of Dial's recent release (LP disc 16) by a Parisian Ensemble directed by Rene

Leibovitz with Ellen Adler as reciter, the composer's own version still sustains interest. If one finds it less brilliant in sound — this, in my estimation, is in its favor, for a proper atmosphere of intimacy is best maintained. Here, the more gifted reciter brings the needed intensity to the performance which Miss Adler was unable to summon, and the composer's direction is a mark of authenticity not to be ignored. Finally, Columbia's disc is not marred by noisy surfaces.

The late Arnold Schönberg was for the better part of his life a controversial figure in the music world. Like many other misunderstood creative men of this century, he became the central figure of a cult which loudly extolled his musical qualities. The intellectual sophistication of his latter music still challenges many listeners and musicians. Its perception lies more in eye-appeal, in my estimation, than ear-appeal. *Pierrot Lunaire* is a masterpiece of its kind, but I doubt that it remains daily fare for many. With a score, assisting the eye as well as the ear, it can prove a fascinating experience, but like so much modern music it can also prove unnerving to some. It is that kind of music. As the late Adolf Weissmann, a leading critic of Germany in the days before Hitler, once said: "It is unlike anything else which can be called music; but it is a unique and telling exposition of the grotesque folly which is its subject". . . "He (Schoenberg) presents the curious phenomenon of creative will under the strict censorship of intellect, critical yet convinced of its own *naiveté*." —P.H.R.

Opera

HUMPERDINCK: *Hänsel und Gretel* (complete); **Hans Heinz Nissen** (Father), **Elisabeth Waldenau** (Mother), **Marie Luise Schilp** (Hansel), **Erna Berger** (Gretel), **Margarete Arndt Ober** (Witch), **Hildegard Erdmann** (Sandman), **Gertrud Walter** (Dewman), **Berlin Mozart Boys' Choir, Symphony Orchestra of Radio Berlin** conducted by **Arthur Rother.** Urania LP set 212, $11.70.

▲HERE, the recording balance favors the voices. The reproductive quality tends to harshness, which however can be controlled. This sort of quality is often apparent in radio performances. The Columbia set of this opera — sung in English — fares better in this respect but is not sung as well as this performance is. Most singers using the English text tend toward too much cuteness in their characterizations of Hänsel and Gretel. Not so Schilp and Berger. Their singing is consistently expressive and their characterizations are wholely believable. Nissen's father is splendidly sung and so too is Ober's Witch. It is surprising to find a Witch that is sung "straight" with fine vocal quality. That this is accomplished by a veteran, Margarete Arndt Ober — the same Ober who was at the Metropolitan in the days before World War I and whose early acoustic records are collectors' items — is equally surprising. Apparently, her voice has remained unimpaired through the long years. It was a happy thought on the producer's part to enlist the services of the Berlin Boys' Choir for the children's voices at the end of the opera.

Rother's conducting is competent and well paced though the Berlin Radio Orchestra here proves not one of the smoothest of ensembles. With proper manipulation of controls I do feel many listeners will derive considerable pleasure from this performance which, in my estimation, is smoother in the original German.

—P.H.R.

PUCCINI: *La Boheme* (complete); **Renata Tebaldi** (Mimi), **Giancinto Prandelli** (Rodolfo), **Hilde Gueden** (Musetta), **Giovanni Inghilleri** (Marcello), **Raphael Arie** (Colline), **Fernando Corena** (Schaunard), and others, with **Orchestra** and **Chorus of Santa Cecilia** (Rome) conducted by **Alberto Erede.** London LP set LLP-462/63, $11.90.

▲THIS REPRODUCTION has a more natural liveness than the Columbia set and profits from being an original tape recording with better breaks. The singing is well balanced with the orchestra but the latter — with its often almost too luminous string tone — lacks the mellowness of the Columbia reproduction which familiarity has probably blessed. Singing honors are about equal between the two sets. The most individual artistry of the present is provided by Hilde Gueden as Musetta — hers is the best sung portrayal of the volatile siren on records to date. Prandelli's Rodolfo is an artistic achievement, reviving for me in its sensitivity and exceptionally nuanced style memories of the late John McCormack's Rodolfo. While Prandelli does not have the tonal richness of Tucker, he is a singularly gifted artist who expressively handles the text. Tebaldi has exceptional vocal beauty — her Mimi has grown in characterization, judging from the manner of her former singing of the arias on domestic Decca discs. But her musicianship is not yet as finely developed as Sayao's, especially in matters of rhythm.

At least two of the other three Bohemians are better sung here — Marcello and Colline. But the orchestral direction is hardly notable — some of the playing is needlessly dragged, though this may well be in deference to the singers. Familiarity with Toscanini's direction of this music makes one realize the difference between merely competent direction and inspired leadership. However, as merits go, in opera from records today, this performance deserves a high rating and it is one that can and should be enjoyed. —P.H.R.

SMETANA: *Verkaufte Braut* (*The Bartered Bride*) (complete); **Robert Koffmane** (Kruschina), **Johanna Blatter** (Kathinka), **Traute Richter** (Marie), **Sebastian Hauser** (Hans), **Kurt Bohme** (Kezal) and others with **Chorusand Orchestra of the Berlin Civic. Opera** conducted by **Hans Lenzer** Urania set URLP 210, 3 discs, $17.55.

▲THE days of the "bartered bride" may be in the past in most countries of today, even Czechoslovakia, but Smetana's *Bartered Bride* still enlists our sympathies by virtue of the melodic charm and vivacity with which the composer endowed this delightful comic opera. Long years ago, Victor brought out a Czech performance on fifteen 12″ discs, which is now withdrawn. The present performance, made in Germany, proves a happy replacement. It is well sung on the whole — with an appealing Marie, an expressive Hans and a firstrate Kezal. The Berlin Civic Opera in the American Zone of Berlin, I am told, boasts the best singers, orchestra and chorus in the German Capitol today. If this is a typical sample of its performances, the company must be a highly competent one judging from operatic standards of today. The performance is pleasantly diverting throughout with some good orchestral playing — if not the most brilliant — and some believable characterizations among the protagonists. The days

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of Bohnen, Rethberg, Tauber and the like in Germany are gone, but the generation of today are not to be lightly dismissed. The reproduction is quite good and on the whole better balanced than some of the recordings that have come from Germany.

As most of us in this country are more familiar with this opera sung in German, the present version should claim a wide audience, particularly since a libretto is supplied with the set. —P.H.R

New «Treasury» Series

(Continued from page 142)

Scotti, and *Ah, Matilde, io l'amo* from *William Tell* by Martinelli and Journet. Though one can dispute the program arrangement, one can hardly deny that Victor has chosen some of its foremost operatic treasures from its rich storehouse.

Stars of the Golden Age (LP disc LCT-1039) contains eleven acoustic and one electrical recording. The latter is an intrusion, despite its excellence, in a curiously conglomerate linking of great singers of yesterday, many of whom were never heard in the opera house or in concert together. Side 1 begins with Galli-Curci's *Sempre libera* from *Traviata* followed by her *Chanson Hindoue* from *Sadko*, next comes Ruffo's 1920 version of *Pari siamo* from *Rigoletto* and Scotti's 1909 *L'onore! Ladri!* from *Falstaff*. Bori's electrical *Un bel di* from *Butterfly* is next, with the 1908 Battistini-Sillich recording of *Lo vedremo, o veglia audice* from *Ernani* ending the side. Side 2 opens with Emmy Destinn's magnificent voicing of Gioconda's *Suicidio* aria, then Caruso's more valued 1913 version of Turiddu's farewell from *Cavalleria* and his equally preferred 1906 recording of *M'appari* from *Martha*. Louise Homer's 1914 recording of *Mon coeur* from *Samson et Dalila* follows, then Nellie Melba's 1910 *Voi che sapete* from *Figaro* with its strangely interpolated high note at the end, and lastly Tetrazzini's rare 1913 *Pastorale* from Veracini's *Rosalinda* which also contains an unfortunately interpolated high note, though it boasts some lovely trills.

Great Pianists of the Past Play Chopin (LP disc LCT-1038) evokes memories of six artists who have passed on and one who is now in advanced age. The artists are de Pachmann, Levitzki, Lhevinne, Paderewski, Rachmaninoff, Rosenthal, and Cortot (still living). All of the recordings are electrical, and each in my estimation offers such finely representative artistry that criticism is forestalled. Indeed, all these recordings received just praise in their day. —P.H.R.

The Art of Egon Petri

(Continued from page 134)

are among Liszt's most inspired and beautiful works . . . that they emerge from his hands not merely arranged for piano, but reconceived, and have in a sense the value of original compositions.".

Petri has always seemed to me the ideal performer of music like this, because he does not endeavor to inflate the pieces but instead plays them simply, expressively and honestly. The music moves under his hands naturally, its rhythmic scheme is not disturbed or distorted — when Liszt embellishes he is careful to keep such passages flowing in even rhythm that does not allow the interpolated sections to become alien to the mood. One can argue that the original songs are self-sufficient entities in themselves, yet all great music allows for transcriptions and one must respect the arranger when he successfully relates his material to the chosen medium. Liszt seems to me to have truly achieved "reconceptions" of value, more so than Tausig in his transcription of the *Andante* and *Variations*, though Lockwood rates Tausig's work as "epoch-making." Both Liszt and Tausig, true giants of the keyboard, set a precedent that later resulted in considerable abuse of less inspired composers.

Columbia has handled its engineering job on this record competently. Mr. Petri seems almost present in the living room. —P.H.R.

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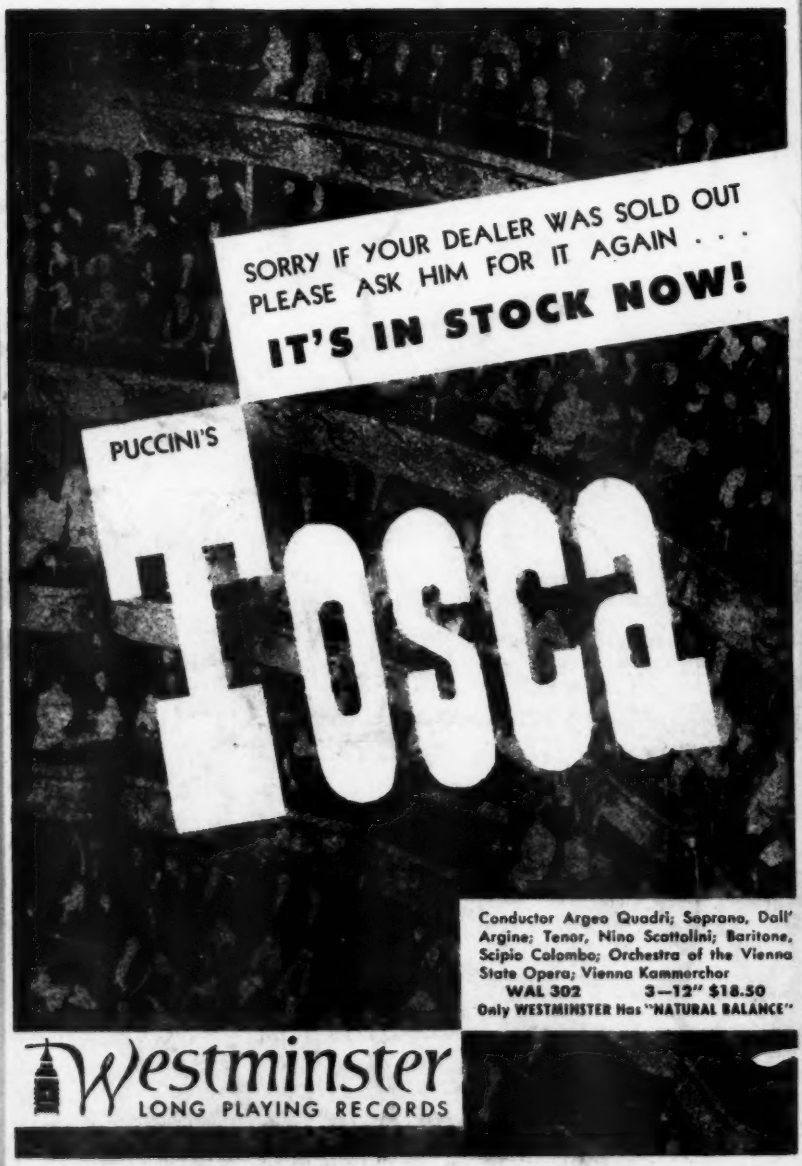
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